

Mary
Magdalene
and
Other Poems

By
Laura E. McCully

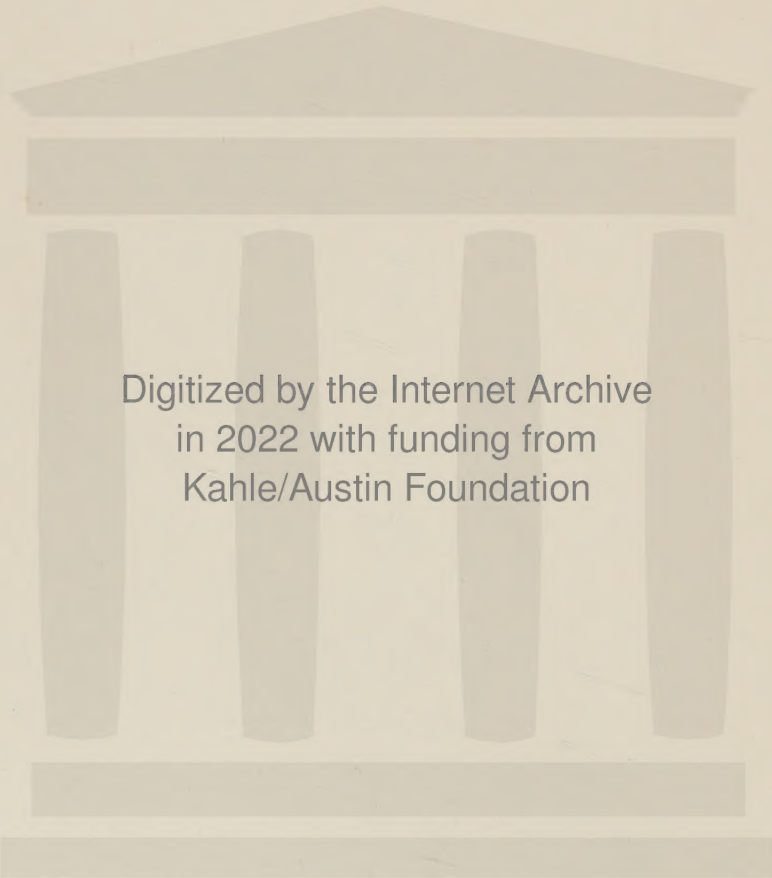


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MARY MAGDALENE

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Mary Magdalene

and Other Poems

By

Laura E. McCully

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Laura E. McCully

To my sister Mary, of beloved memory, this, my
first book is dedicated.

PREFACE.

My song, come, let us sing
No lay of love in summer on the wing,
But love's great aspiration and the praise
Of love surviving loss and evil days.

My song, be sweet and brief
Hymning the hope that will not die of grief,
Breathing a word of comfort in the ear,
How death at length transcendeth woe and fear.

Be pitiful, my song,
Telling of human wreck and human wrong,
If man to man at the last fail to respond,
Better for them, for us, no life beyond.

And oh my song, take part
In Truth's immortal victory over art,
For thee no ornate phrase or form, content
To see thy garment neither soiled nor rent.

What of the clamouring folk
Who seek a great to-do o'er each word spoke?
My song, their scorn will never win us ruth
If we should strike one untouched chord of truth.

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MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES.

On Beauty.

I might have been a herd girl on the hills,
Tending my flock afield with blackened hands,
Face ruddied by the boldness of the sun,
And feet rough sandalled, brown as fallen leaves.
Lo, what I am yon polished surface tells,
And I much ponder that it should be so
Remembering what I was; for all that shape
Is like the very fairest things one dreams
Nor hopes to see in flesh, then, marvelling, finds
Upon a day, in some quite casual place
As I found Lais. How I love my face,
Wide-eyed and delicate and oval-lipped
With small, child head poised on the long, full throat,
And mist of hair, deep as mid-summer dreams.
And, oh, the silver sandals and the gleam
Of this great mantle, trailing to the floor,

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Heavy with gems! Who knew that I was fair
Till Roman Titus found me on the hills?
The hot sun burnt me brown and lame I was,
And stooped, and frail of body, and a girl
Tall and full-breasted, ruddy as the dawn,
Mocked me and stole the boy I loved from me.

A curious thing is beauty. First of all
I slept long, blessed hours and lived at ease
And hungered not, but sang and danced all day.
And marking me, my master used to boast,
“See how she stretches heavenward and blooms!”
Then was I taught in Greek, and fed my soul
On all men wrote of beauty. Last, I learnt
How certain colors, textures, flowers or gems
Called forth the secret meaning of my face
And blazoned it for all the world to read,
As one should cry, “Pause ye or pass ye by,
But never look to see the like again.”
And many looked, but none had seen the like
And yet it pleased. So now they spread my fame
For beauty even unto sovereign Rome,
I, puny, dun, and jeered at by my mates
What time I ran a herd girl in the hills.

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Thus have I mastered beauty, not their gift,
The envious years seem scarce to bate my prize.
This image fronting me with searching gaze
Looks forth no older than ten years ago
When Titus died who gave the steel to me
And made me rich and loved me for my hair,
He who alone of all men did me good.
Rich am I and beloved, and friends I have
More true than lovers. Lais, my dear girl,
Whose pure perfection puts this face to shame
If men but knew, and now she hides the grace
That sculptors pine for 'twixt the four blind walls
Of her Roman merchant's home, my Lais loves me,
Who saved her with hard wisdom not her own,
Nor any maid's, and made her ways secure.
But now she is gone, and others come and go,
On whom I pour forth all I have and am,
Lover, or friend, or slave, the false with the true,
All, all pass on and none continueth,
And therefore am I sick and sad at heart,
Seeing my beauty barren of it's end.
I would I were that herd girl, tall and strong
And rough of hand, who stole my love from me
What time I tended kine among the hills.

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

On Sin.

Do I seem young and fair? Ah piteous show,
Bitter deceit, more loathly than the truth
Stern prophets spoke! For what is hell save this,
That life, which like the Flame craves sustenance
And fed on offerings pure burns up to God
A very incense, this same living fire
Profaned with unclean fuel either fails
Or pitifully dwindles day by day,
While darkness menaces the stricken priest
With threat of night, the only, the profound?
Alas for me, that Avatar am I,
And my soul's life the flame that shrinks and shrinks,
Fed with debaucheries and starved for love.
Thus comes it that I haunt forbidden ways
Who might have refuge in kings' palaces,
Poor wretch, so torn and harried by desire
No walls may hold me, nor no bars enclose,
Nor lowering night deter. But up I rise
From the warm arms of flushed and passionate
dreams
Out of the house of love to wander forth
A pilgrim and a strayaway of night,
Desirous and desired, pursuing still
And still pursued, and still unsatisfied!

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

What seemeth real to one who dwells in sin ?
Do not all things become as shades, all flesh
As withered herb, all kisses like the brine,
Bitter as blood stung forth by bitter tears,
Yet faint and far-off as forgotten dreams ?
Ah, but the dreadful pangs of birth or death
Were wine to one who feels the pulsing life
Slipping like sand through fingers impotent
That fear to tremble, fear and trembling, fail !
Inexorable, cruel the eternal law,
For man may reason out his right and wrong
And in good faith may miss the mark or err
Through ignorance. Little recks the law of him,
But smites him in his flesh ; thus knoweth he
Evil from good and thus receiveth death.
Nay, he receiveth nought, but dead is he
By so much as he erred, for light is dead
Unto the blind, and to the unhearing ear
The four winds and the waters speak in vain.
Most of all love, the fount and source of life,
Abhorreth sin : the dull, insensate clay
That bursts in greenness mocks us with it's life.

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Poor masque of beauty, masking living death,
Folly that erred in ignorance and strayed
Far on the flinty hills and burning sands
With yearning arms outstretched to catch the dream!
Ah, lovely plumaged, bright, ethereal bird
Whose song seductive lures the spring to earth,
Wakens the clod to woo the bending heavens
With palmy boughs and scents of Araby
More rich than ever caravan brought back
From the fabled East, spoil of forgotten kings,
Oh Joy, thou nightingale that sings to the soul,
Where is thy home on earth? The twin of love
Heaven born thou art, yet not remote as thee
Love seems, and having caught and tamed her song
We seek thee through the world but never find.
Thus is life unfulfilled, for though ye seem
Each to the other close as body to soul
Together dwell ye not, for evermore
Fear is conceived of Love and Joy takes wing.

Then wherefore are we made? Let God take heed,
I, cursed among His creatures, by that curse
Dare to demand of Him who makes and makes,
All undeterred by sight of wretchedness,

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Wherefore he giveth life and giveth law
Each warring with the other, so that man
Stumbles from death to death, from night to night?
One good I saw in life and that was love.
I needs must grasp the highest good I saw.
Look on me, Thou who madest, for I am sick
In the core of being, yea, my soul is sick,
Torn to disintegration, hither flung
And thither, finding only choice of ills.
Hear me, for now I curse Thee. Let me die!

On Love.

Sing, heart of spring, along the winter ways,
Go lightly feet, 'twas here His footsteps fell,
The birds sing of Him for he counted them
And knew them all, the little winged loves
Like happy thoughts! Yea, every leaf that kissed
Him passing in the garden hath such life
As puts our immortality to shame.
The winds are pregnant with His message now,
The Universal, all-uniting winds
That know no limitation, like the spirit
Of mighty truths, sweeping creation's bounds,

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Disdaining man-made barriers, change and time.
Yea, since He came, sing resurrected soul,
As nature sings, through winter unto spring.
For now the ancient curse is past away,
The simple way and straight made plain to man
And love exalted, love revealed, proclaimed.
Not love that self has sought for selfish ends,
Nor love possessing or possessed, but love
Creating, sacrificing, binding all,
Conceiving good but as the good of all,
Laying down life that life may be fulfilled
In the new life that springs a thousandfold
More rich for sacrifice. Oh perfect bliss
Which man alone of all creation failed
To grasp, to comprehend! See how the earth
Meekly and sweetly, with a sure content,
Lays down the old year's leaves, yields to the wind
Her precious, garnered seeds, nor makes complaint,
But in her heart, all lowly, sings of spring;
See her emerge from tempest, recreate,
Instinct with life, noble and large and calm,
At peace with the infinite purposes of God!

MARY MAGDALENE SOLILOQUIZES

Sing, heart of spring, along the wintry way
His blessed feet made glad. Weep not for Him,
Nor for the world, nor for thy human pain.
Could'st thou have died as He did, who could rend
That place from thee? Most perfect was His part,
But thou hast thine, to succor, heal and teach,
Even as He, perchance to die as He
For man. Sing happy heart along life's way
For joy and love are met in thee and life
Wells new within thee, sing for spring is here,
Sing, for thine eyes have seen the Risen Lord.

SAY NOT THAT LOVE IS DEAD.

Say not that love is dead,
Though spring hath lost it's chiefest grace,
Though now no rose is quite so red,
Nor yet on any other face
Is such a glory shed.

Nay, put thy grief aside :
All that was worth and might endure,
That never failed but perfect died,
All that was tender, strong and sure
Doth in thy heart abide.

Cherish the smart, the pain,
Reflect, of all good things that be,
Which canst thou promise will remain ?
But Death hath signed and sealed to thee
This grief, thy deathless gain.

A BARREN STOCK.

I pondered on the words of that great queen
Who mothered England in the hour of need,
Yet went forth lonely, last of a royal seed,
Finding no staff on which her age might lean.
“I am but a barren stock!”, her bitter cry
Seemed to exemplify the loud mouthed creed
That heralds woman’s mission but to breed,
The *res angusta* all her ministry.
Then I bethought me of the great queen’s toil
And how her wit was pivot to a world,
Her single minded zeal a gift from God.
I saw her mightier motherhood, impearled
Her regal robes with blessings, free from soil
Of self, and in her hand a blossoming rod.

SAPPHO IN LEUCADIA.

The great sea calls me from it's promontories,
The winds are on my lips with the salt tang of foam,
Oft like a strayaway enthralled I listened to their
stories,
Now with strong wings they beat and urge me home.

Broken the lyre and dumb the throat of passion,
Broken the heart whose sighing strings Love swept
with might,
See how he casts the instrument aside in master
fashion,
Scorning the cord unstrung, the unfinished flight.

Will he take heed, or pity me his lover?
Nay, but the sea has kisses softer and more kind;
I shall lie all at peace and lapped in cool embraces over,
And only be a prey to wave and wind.

In the blast of death my summer loves are flying,
My soul, a god without a worshipper, stands forth,
Midmost his ruinous temple, unto desolation crying
"What was my truth and what my word of worth?"

SAPPHO IN LEUCADIA.

Aye, spend and be spent for love, to go forth lonely,
Barter and beg for the gift that is gone like a
morning dream,
For the lies that cloaked the horrid void are rent, and
truth stands only,
And none may solace his soul with things that seem.

Shall no sweet Lesbian girl for Sappho linger,
Longing to hear her song at eve among the vines,
Half-passionate, half-fearful, side-long drawn to the
knees of the singer,
Where, lo, the nightingale alone repines ?

Or he, my bright-haired boy not come to seek me,
Gaze with white rage and grief at the sleek and
smiling sea,
And swim far out, and ponder on his own young life
to wreak me,
And think on her, and thinking, weep for me ?

But after woo remembrance, deeming holy
The thought that for his sake there blossomed such
a strain,
And teach his babes to lisp my songs, each word with
care and slowly,
“For none shall come to sing as she again.”

SAPPHO IN LEUCADIA.

My Phaon's bitter wine shall time make mellow,
Not his the choice of poisoned grapes in love's
despite,
But all the grain that I stored is dust, and the fruit
is dried and yellow,
And my day of harvest falleth on the night.

But one, the thought of whom my thought defileth,
Oh Thou, whose part in me at the last is all I am,
Over the bier of lust self-slain thine awful image
smileth.
Dumb are all songs, eternal is the psalm.

I sang all joys, I left no cup untasted,
Stilled the rebellious blood with strange forbidden
wine,
Now in my hunger, subtle sweets are surfeiting and
wasted,
Liefer had I at the last the bitter brine.

Once I had deemed along the shades to seek thee,
Like a glad stainless bride aglow with joy and song,
Hate me not, who could love so well and yet despair
so weakly,
Pity me, who in sin have loved so long.

SAPPHO IN LEUCADIA.

I am not fit to approach thy shining presence,
All ocean cannot wash me white nor cleanse me
free,
Nevertheless, when death has set at large the im-
mortal essence,
As rain to billow, back must it to thee.

Didst thou not teach me, through all passion's
glamour,
By the senses that betray, in the body to aspire ?
Catch the clear note of spirit singing to God above
the clamour,
Steal for an altar the unhallowed fire ?

I have no words to set forth my devotion,
Would drown my lesser loves in death for thy
dear sake,
Brave the last dream alone in the sharp bosom of
the ocean,
Remorsefully my barren guerdon take.

Oh Perfect love, single in incarnation,
Life of all forms, but in one form alone sublime,
I would fare forth from the house that hath not held
thy revelation,
Haply death hides thee, and the abyss from time.

A CENTURY ROSE.

Art thou indeed no more,
And is there left in all the lonesome world
No sign, no glimpse, no scent of thee, dead rose ?
Who read thine exquisite significance,
Or breathed the curious perfume of thy soul,
Or understood thy singular perfection,
Oh thing of God, oh pledge and oath, thou rose ?
Were not thy leaves as red as warm heart's blood ?
Was not thy beauty like a sudden sword,
Were not all transience, all loss and pain
Writ large upon thy faultless loveliness ?
The poor, dull world had but one hour of thee,
Yet passed thee by, dead rose.

Henceforth I laugh in scorn,
To hear men's praises of some lesser thing,
Violet, lily, rose unrosed by thee,
Or bloodless glory set with budding bays,
Pale in the heavy incense of desire.
But thee the Craftsman consummate devised
In some still solstice of eternity
When rose from all His worlds no plea nor cry,
But He brooded at eve, and watched the flower-like
Slow-opening in the field of night beneath, [stars
And dreamed of thee, purple and dewy sweet,
And made, and blessed, and gave ; but suffering not
The ancient, churlish need of scorn, He snatched
Thee back to His heart, last rose.

TWO VOICES.

All day long, the boats on the bay,
One call they have, be it loud or low,
As over the bar to the blue they go,
“Follow, follow,” they whistle and say,
“Love hath passed on, this way, this way.”

Through the still night their voices cry,
I wake and listen and toss distrest,
And rise to follow the endless quest,
Though I hear the wind in the pine trees sigh,
“Love hath forever passed by, passed by.”

CASSANDRA.

To-night when the noise of war was hushed awhile
And stilled the hungry tide of that swelling sea
That all day long gnaws at our Trojan walls,
On street and square there came a lull, the moon
Looked down, nor hid her face to hear the tread
Of them that bear the fallen from the field.
So unto me, denied the boon of sleep,
There came a breath of peace, the twilight fell
Cool on my spirit, and I rose up like one
Who throws aside the menace of his fear,
Masters and scorns it, though he knows full well
That in his black hour back will it again
To goad and threaten. Out came I and roused
My staring girls and bade them tire my hair,
Bring sandals forth and gird my robe with gold
And gloomy emeralds dark with lurking dreams,
Then hither turned my steps, where the temple shades
The shrine the Trojan maidens love to deck,—
But not like them am I come here to pray!
Proud god, I would not purchase if I could
One moment's respite from the weight I bear
By any prayer of mine breathed up to thee.
Face to face we two stand, spirit and flesh,
Thou in the glory of eternal youth,
With limbs of light, calm eyes, ambrosial hair,

CASSANDRA.

Face to face we two stand, spirit and flesh,
Thou in the glory of eternal youth,
With limbs of light, calm eyes, ambrosial hair,
I mortally weary, worn and old as the world,
But all the human lusts and frailty thine,
And mine the aspiration and the dream.
Think not I rue the penalty I pay
Which draws me nearer to the heart of things.
Knowledge is pain, and love and life are pain,
And every upward impulse from the clay
Is pain, and but by pain we have no growth.
Thus I, by love and peace and rest renounced,
And by the fire that hourly wastes my brain
Am become more of spirit than of flesh,
And shortly shall put off this broken frame.
Oh that along with it I might put off
The unutterable yearning that I have,
The sense of unfulfilment, balked desire,
Barren unfruitfulness of body and soul!
For I have searched the stars with thee by night,
And in thy temple stood at sacrifice,
And walked with gods and goddesses in the dusk;
So when I first beheld thee in the grove
Effulgent, tall and godlike in thy brows,

CASSANDRA.

Ripe with the wisdom of a thousand years,
My soul was thine, Apollo, and thy look
Bent on me like a lover's, yet so sure
And intimate, as one who reads a child,
Was to me as the sun by which we live.
Stooping to me, it seemed you gathered up
The life that pulsed and throbbed in every vein,
Straining back to its source in you as tides
Yearn upward irresistibly to the heavens.
Then was I happy being in ignorance.
There was a law within and I knew it not,
I might have drained the cup of life to the dregs
And who should blame? But having heard that voice
That to my importuning and my prayers,
My cry for light, "Thou unknown power, give light!"
And thy more awful invocation spoke,—
Then, lo, the universe writ large with law,
Once seen, so plain, so not to be gainsaid,
And I, the eager, rash, unready fool,
How might I then reject the trust so given?
For here stand I, the solitary link
That all this wretched people has with God.
What am I, oh Eternal, that thy hand
Is laid on me in agony and light?

CASSANDRA.

Oh, little deity of minstrels' rhymes,
Music that tinkles and fair-sounding phrase,
Beauty that fades, and fame that faints for breath
When cities rock and crumble in the dust
At violation of His lightest law,
Spirit whose evil spell He lets me bear,
Last burden of my mere mortality,
Apollo, yes thy name is like the wave
Making sweet music on a far-off shore,
Thy face shall never more bend down to me,
Perfect in manly beauty, one to love,—
Oh, but I bear a heavy heart for thee!
Say, shalt thou ever put me from thy mind?
Thou who so oft hast loved, so oft forgot?
Never remember once the dulcet voice
That wooed thee, rising softly to thy shrine,
The step that came as quickly as thy fawn's,
Cool finger-tips more welcome than the breeze?
Alas, thou art lost to me, for when I pass
I go to mine own place where there is peace,
And may not even keep the bitter curse,
And all that remaineth of our passionate love.
For thee, in vain shall Greece enthrone thee high,
Embodiment to all ages of her dream,

CASSANDRA.

The Incarnate Art, the symbol deified.
Soon shall thy worship perish among men,
And from thy ruined temples shall thou flee,
Scared at the potent whisper of a name
Spoken with bated breath, where huddled close
Beneath the shelter of the abandoned porch
A few pale peasants leaning on their staves
Give ear to the deep-voiced stranger's wondrous tale.
Gone is the sudden vision from my eyes,
A starless midnight settles round my soul.
I know no word to tell the grief I have,
The unutterable weariness at heart,
For I have raised the brimming cup of life,
Gazed in the ruby redness of its wine,
Deeming it blessed in eyes of gods and men ;
And even as I gazed have seen the sweet it held
Turn into living poison at the lips,—
So dashed it from me. Would that I had drunk !
Life knows no bitterness so deep as this,
To have left the cup untasted, not to have drunk
And later learned, but kept the memory
Of that first, overwhelming taste of bliss.

Into the silent streets again will I.
This desecrated fane and sighing grove
Shall hear my plaint and know my face no more.

CASSANDRA.

Bury your dead, ye trees that weep in dew,
Season by season heap your fallen leaves.
Crumble, ye pillars white and cover deep
The treasure here enshrined, that never man
Mocking the face of him I loved shall say,
“ Behold, a heathen god carved out of stone ! ”
But I will bury my dead, no nevermore,
But bear them in my bosom night and day,
More patient in my grief whom men call mad
Than any Trojan mother when she leans
Low o’er the still face of her youngest boy,
And never lifts her eyes to curse the light
Of Grecian Helen passing in the sun.
If these have patience, shall not I be brave ?
But oh, to serve and suffer to no end,
Judged mad by the mad folly of a world !
Alas, alas, my country, woe to thee !
Why will ye never heed the warning voice ?
Surely if I should cry and cry again,
“ Woe unto Troy, beware the Grecian guile ”,—
What, will not one take heed ? Brothers, my friends,
Are you all silent, all ? Walls, walls and stones,
Half empty homes, and courts and vacant streets,
’Ware, ’ware the impending doom ! My cry is lost,

CASSANDRA.

Not one will hear, unnoticed and alone,
Sole witness of the unseen I prophesy.
And if a nodding sentry lifts his head,
“ ‘Tis mad Cassandra,” mutters he and turns,
Eases his armour and goes pacing by.
Good-night, thou fairest city, ere this moon
Have waned again, full lowly shalt thou lie ;
My native land, short as my time, alas
That I should live to see thee bear the yoke,
I, who so cheerfully would die for thee !
Yet since this may not be, a long farewell.
Peace to ye, restless shades, who would not heed,
And to my friends who so misprized my words,
Forgiveness free, and a timely, valorous death.

For me remains one comfort, one great hope ;
For when on the topmost tower I sit apart
Watching the east where night seems most to lower,
There breathe upon my ears deep words of peace,
I have a settled confidence at heart
Though the veil lifts not to my searching eyes,
Nor do I clearly see as when by day
I cry out warnings through these streets of Troy,
Only, at times, far off, I may descry,

CASSANDRA.

Symbol of all the higher hopes of man,
The pale, increasing radiance of one star.
So may I not despair of ultimate good,
But tread the path appointed dauntlessly,
And though I sought in vain to save my race,
A later day shall weigh and understand,
Nor all unsung shall I pass down the shades,
A virgin and the daughter of a king.

IN THE WILDERNESS

Young mother, loved of me, whose precious babe
Is thrust by you into my open arms
That so the love I bear you should be hers
As freely as 'tis thine, ah pause, ah think,
This heart she lies on bled to-day, these hands
That hold her grew benumbed with painful chill
And the inmost spirit shuddered, consonant
With the forsaken dumbness of that child
Whose hopeless eyes beset me as I came.

My friend, let all your praise to silence fall,
Call me not fair nor good! What shame is mine
To hear those words! I have not hungered once,
Nor, save as I choose, laboured beyond my strength,
Yet see, these hands to-day are worn and soiled
With toil that still falls short of the needed loaf,
And therefore is the face, too, soiled and worn,
Not good to see, wearing my sister's guise:
To-day my soul was with her in the streets.

All ye false, cold and pusillanimous friends,
Accursed with joys wherein to forget your God,
Wise are ye not, even to guard your own!
How can ye prosper and so many perish?
Surely one day the flood shall lap your doors!
But as for me, I am become a voice
Of protest in this gloom, I am consumed
With inward fire and feel and know that flame
But a reflection of the unrisen dawn.

FRIENDSHIP.

I hear thee in the pauses of the song,
Thy voice is in the wind, is in the sea,
Familiar features glimmer from the throng,
Through the dim woods white fingers beckon me.

Over the voice of flattery rings thy truth,
Beside thy memory treachery stands unmasked,
Enwrapt about the thought of thee all ruth,
All tenderness of charity unasked.

Having known thee, no more I dwell in dread
'Midst an unfriendly folk no kin of mine,
Men are become my brothers and the bread
I break with them and drink the sacred wine.

Yea, for I hear thy voice through all their speech,
And holding fast by thee I dare to stand
Far from my kind, beyond the angels' reach,
A faint fore-runner in a shadowed land.

OUR LITTLE SISTER.

Weep, little shrinking spirits of the woods,
Hang down your fair, green faces, all ye leaves,
And dews be heavy on the year's firstborn,—
Yea, weep as rain, all ye that breathe of spring,
To-day I passed her in the city streets.

Surely the kind brown earth must pity her,
Nursing it's young so safely at the breast,
All the great winds that no man may defile
Compassionate her, and the bending trees
Happy in fruitfulness and blest with song !

But where her feet are set of all God made
No stone remains ; and wearing childhood's face
Fixed in an awful lethargy and calm,
Defiled, defiling, yet accusing not,
Avenged upon her race, she passes on.

THE ETERNAL CHALLENGE.

Stand up, oh man, and answer from thy heart,
Hast thou refused the mission, shunned the quest,
Hast thou denied the whisper in thy breast,
Excused thyself for what thou dost and art,

Saying, "This calling is too great for me,
"An evil order waxes and is strong,
"How may one hand avail against the wrong
"To save an unwilling people? Let me be!"

And thou hast feared and hid thy face from men
And slain the first-born of thy spirit given
To youth's wild yearning for the earthly heaven
And it, though dead, speaketh to thee again!

Rise up, thou faltering, thou erring man,
Thy puny strength the world may laugh to scorn,
Yet if it please high heaven thou shalt be borne
Breast high upon the flood of some great plan

Such as in former days His seers upbore.
And into thee shall flow the life and might
That hold the solar laws of day and night
Fixed and unchangeable forevermore.

Learn thou the law that linketh sun to clod :
There is no life in evil, like dead grass
In forest fire shall it's resistance pass,
Set to the flint thy sword, thou son of God !

THE LINK.

Was the day short

Wayfarer, lone wayfarer,

Might the sun athwart

The hills have died unnoted, though thrice rarer

A golden summer promise it had caught ?

Was there such tumult in thy setting forth,

And the long race in heat of haste begun ?

Yea, for thy footsteps followed on the sun,

And thou wast set upon a quest of worth,

And might'st not bide nor stay

All thy short, hurried day.

Is thy race run,

Oh lightfoot message bearer,

Through the thick cohorts won

That desperate way ? On thy still face no fairer

Looks down the setting than the rising sun.

Wherefore the urgent haste, the weary war,

Are they not hollow hearted on whose spears

Thou liest low ? Softly fell down their tears,

Nor answered they, but gazed on what they bore,

While from their midst, intent,

A mighty runner went.

CAPTAIN SCOTT.

(Lines written to Beethoven's Funeral March on the Death of a Hero.)

Gaze again where he lies, lowly laid,
Palled in praise, blest in every word said.
Even so, each one for the good of all
Might not we, too, earn the blessing, share the pall?
Ah, for us but to watch the feet and head,
We the servants, he the son, lying dead.
Weep not then, but let us raise a solemn song
For a Briton, heir to fame ages long.

Safe with such shall the old tradition rest,
Stainless down the centuries passed from best to best,
From the mists whence the ancient epic spoke,
Praised the dragon-slayer dying for his folk,
Until now, when with proud and silent tread
See a nation laying bays about her dead.
Learn her great and simple secret all who can,—
Not for self lives or dies the Englishman.

THE TROUBADOUR'S LYRE.

Sing low, my precious lyre, low in each string,
Thou wast not framed for exaltation's burst,
Or chant sustained, straining thy golden chords,
Sing low, sing low, thou constant friend, my lyre.

For now we two may wander forth in peace,
Shattered our shackles are and stricken from us,
And we shall rise and steal out into the world,
Singing all day, on every way, my lyre.
Like Orpheus have we two sojourned through hell,
And with our eyes seen evil, nor availed
To wrest their treasure from the envious shades.
Therefore come forth, leave to the Gods their world !

If we should find that orchard lamped with gold
Of heart's desire, fasting will we pass on,
Nor rifle one small, new-blown wayside flower,
But bless it's beauty, pass and passing, sing !

Thus shall we travel light of foot and free,
And call the world our garden and the woods
Our house, and hear the great winds call to us,
And sometimes feel the dripping of the dews
In lonely places. Come, for we are free.
Oh lyre, heart of my heart, formed for the wind
That is God's breath, and not for human hands
Jangling amid the strings, come, let us go !

PSYCHE.

Now deepens whispering night about this place
Where every air that breathes is sweet with summer,
Now are the hovering birds content with sleep,
And the clear moon and intermittent stars
Do but peer forth at times and hide again,
As myriad drowsy, heavy-lidded eyes.
Friendly as loving thoughts are trees by night,
Casting all ways their nets of perfume rare
As with a harmless magic men to draw
Into their own great-hearted fellowship.
See how their patience waits, no leaf is stirred,
Even the stars and moon in their great paths
Pausing awhile catch breath! The midnight blue
Sends forth no single meteor, from the earth
Exhale the exquisite odors of that prayer
Whereby unceasingly she scales the sky.

Ah love, 'tis even thus in mine own heart,
For I too wait, and fain would I draw near
Unto thy shelter as to a spreading tree.

PSYCHE.

Thy magic nets are all about my feet,
Nor have I far to go, yet pause for breath
Even as the hastening stars, and as the earth
Yearns to the heavens and fain would raise herself
Unto the aery lift, my soul unfolds
The mighty wings of her great love, herself
Though puny and earth-born. Oh love, my love,
This is the night of summer, this the prime
Of the year's fulness which we dreamed in spring,
Come not too soon nor stay ! For now my voice
For which the nightingale broke off his lay
In turn shall cease. Haply thy step I hear
Rustling amid the leaves ! Ah, be thou kind,
Bid me not sing to thee, Immortal Love
Too far transcends this mortal power of song.

MAPLE AND HOLLY.

When on the hearth the Yule-log blazes red,
And Christmas candles with their rosy glow
Lighten to pink the paler mistletoe
And snowy festal board beneath it spread,
And when in honour of our British sires
We twine the English holly loyally
With oak beloved of captains of the sea
Whose deeds live still about Canadian fires,
Oh then forget not from some treasured tome
To draw a slender sheaf of leaves, laid by
When frosty autumn reddened all the dome
Of this, our wider, freer northern sky,
And whisper, as ye hang it yet more high,
“The maple for my native land and home!”

LAUS PATRIAE

How shall I sing to thee, dear mother of mine,
Find a young song for thee in this thy springtime,
For thou comest forth gloriously arrayed in green
garments, veiled in mist and flower begemmed
Under the ardent eyes of the sun, thy lover.
Thou art to me as a world apart, my native land,
Nestling beyond thy lakes in the heart of the magic
north ;
Unto thee longing flies as a bird in the homing
season.
Other lands are kinder, but I know thy ways and
I love thee.
I am the child of thy rude and vigorous nurture,
I have born the lash of thy winds and thy waves
have buffeted me,
Thy breath of ice has been sharp as a sword on my
body,
Yet has thou stolen into my veins with the wine of
thy winters,
Bewitched and enchanted me, holding my heart in
thy thrall evermore.

LAUS PATRIAE.

So I sing of thy beauty when the turning year brings
back the springtime,
Of the resinous scent of thy pine-hills, thy fresh
rushing streams,
Of thy newly turned uplands and the rich brown of
thy furrows,
Oh land of quick sunshine and fleeting shadow,
Oh land of clear airs and great seas of translucent
fresh waters !
Where but in thee is the light of day so golden and
yet so gentle ?
The thoughts of the heart are blown clean by thy
breath as by the Creator's.
Thy nurslings are dreams, thou shalt become the
mother of poets.
But dearest art thou for what thou standest for, for
the ideal
Of a people frugal and pure, living close to the
sweet-breathing earth,
Guiding the plough across the barren and catching
the vision,
Dragging the net in the lake and walking the waters
with Him of Galilee.
For this, the promise of thee, and for the white
thrall of thy beauty,

LAUS PATRIAE.

Putting to shame the tawdry, tranquillizing the
heart, revealing the true,
I hold to thee, fairest of lands and dearest of
mothers,
Allegiance unshakable, best be thou, first be thou
never
Till best be first; but thine be the crowning glory
To bring forth a race of men, though a few, to be
poor in money
But great in spirit and rich in song and magnan-
imous in brotherly love!

CANOE SONG AT TWILIGHT.

Down in the west the shadows rest,
Little grey wave, sing low, sing low,
With a rhythmic sweep o'er the gloomy deep
Into the dusk of the night we go :
And the paddles dip and lift and slip,
And the drops fall back with a pattering drip:
The wigwams deep of the spirits of sleep
Are pitched in the gloom on the headland steep.
Wake not their silence as you go,
Little grey wave, sing low, sing low !

From your porch on high where the clouds go by,
Little white moon, look down, look down,
'Neath night's shut lid the stars are hid,
And the last late bird to his nest has flown.
The slow waves glide and sink and slide
And rise in ripples along the side ;
The loons call low in the marsh below,
Night weaves about us her magic slow,—
E'er the last faint gleam in our wake be gone,
Little white moon, look down, look down !

THE EXILE.

I stand upon the cliff that lies along
The seaboard and beneath my feet the waves,
A million hungry mouths flecked with white foam,
Reach at its base. The lowering, sullen sky
Hangs dense above, while mocking at it's chill
The inland slopes have clothed themselves with
green,
Intense, unchanging, alien unto eyes
Before whose gaze a vision ever floats,
The haunting beauty of another land :
A land of brighter sun and deeper shade,
A land of rushing streams and pine-clad hills,
Of tangled woods and lucid inland seas,
Of hidden hollows where the grass grows tall
A sombre, restful green ; a land where spring,
Touching the woods with tender finger tips,
Awakes a harmony of various hues.
And here and there the pleasant, tawny green
Of mountain ash trees bursting into leaf
Makes frivolous a sober, grey old hill,

THE EXILE

Or tender maples, delicately bright,
Gleam in the sudden glory of the sun,
And silver birches through the valley spread
Waver in watery sheen of green and white.

And now methinks I see again the stream
Swollen with rain, where we were wont to go
Hunting spring-beauties, and the level dale,
Flecked with brown-spotted yellow addertongues.
It seems as though 'twere yesterday we found
Those rare, white bleeding hearts, upon a bank
Of shelving mould, held by the clinging roots
Of modest, white anemones they grew,
And in the hollow of the wood beyond
There stood a host of lilies newly blown.
Then o'er the little hills we went in haste
And peered in every shaded, mossy nook
Seeking the first, pale, early violet.
'Twas thus the twilight found us scattered 'mong,
Hollows and dens and thickets glooming deeps.
We made the valleys echo to our shouts
And wild hallooing for companions missed
Answered by eager cries from hill to hill
As through the dusk we took our homeward way.

THE EXILE

Oh, would that I might hear my pines again
Moaning an evensong, or sme the breath
Of my own mother earth when after rain
She offers incense to the changing skies !
I stand upon the cliff that frowns along
The seaboard and beneath my feet the waves
Murmur in ceaseless, changeless monotone
The message of the grey, mysterious sea
Saying to me, "Thou shalt return no more !"
And I make answer to that restless voice,
"Yea, though I sold my birthright for a price
And shall return no more, my native land,
My heart lies buried in thy sombre woods,
In dreams I hear the singing of thy streams,
Wander at will thy deep, enchanted vales
And feel my being reaching out to thee."
And as a lover having parted from
His dear desire, through lust of fame or gold,
Yet keeps a sacred memory in his heart
And cannot quite forget the sorry past,
But on the day that saw their last farewell
Wanders along the old familiar paths
And keeps a trysting with pale memory,
So am I come to gaze across the sea,
And listen to the murmur of the waves.

THE EXILE

And though no voice has power to call me back
Or move me from my chosen path, yet I
Am fain to pay this tribute to my love,
That in my heart a place is empty still
And ever will be. Take my message then,
Ye winds that fret the heavens with your wail,
And bear it far across the angry sea
To that fair shore I shall not see again
Which once I loved to call my native land.

AT NIAGARA.

Came evening to the rainbow-archéd west
And threw her mantle o'er the setting sun.
Crowned queen with dew, her cool reign had begun
And perfumed breezes lulled the soul to rest ;
Then clear and strong from out it's shaded nest
A bird sang : all was hushed and still, alone
Lilted the liquid voice, and when 'twas done
The misty soul of Evening seemed exprest.
And when about the pillared portico
The shadows deepened and Niagara's sound
Was wafted up by breezes from below,
Then as the bird in sweetest song had found
A way through which the evening's joy might flow,
I longed, in turn, to paint it's peace profound !

TO A CANADIAN GIRL.

Of to my fancy comes, I know not why,
The face of one who never was my friend,
An Image dwelling in the memory
Whichever way my wandering footsteps tend,
That still doth come and lingers sweetly smiling,
My fancy with it's loveliness beguiling.

Sweet girl, I longed to have your friendship so,
Of in my lonely youth you seemed to me
That other self I would but might not be,—
Such sore, unwilling ways our feet must go,
But be your path well sheltered from the wind,
Yours no rough wisdom, leaving stings behind!

True is it that we two might not be friends,
Yet I possess thee, am by thee possessed.
Thy loveliness each passing summer spends,
But in my heart is garnered up its best,
The April grace, so light, impetuous, fair,
The dazzling eyes, the drift of sunlit hair.

Yea, these and more! Oh golden rose of life,
I know the magic that thou hast for me!
A student exile, lost in the alien strife,
Some passing face in the crowd recalleth thee,—
And like a north-bound bird my heart takes wing,
I am at home again and it is spring!

EMILY WILDING DAVISON.

Not often sounds the hero's horn
Before our gates these latter days,
We have forgotten that old praise
Of tilting knights and dames forlorn,
Hidden in disregarded ways
Our deeds of chivalry are born.

And thou, who bravedst the whole world's scorn
Meeting thy death in sordid wise
To keep a cause before their eyes
And flaunt a flag that fools have torn,
I deem thee knight of high emprise,
Dear comrade, whom with tears we mourn.

BLACK WEATHER ON THE LAKES.

Sing a song for a lake sailor,
Sturdy, blithe and brown,
Any weather was his choice,
Up the shores or down,
Hearty comrades hailed him in
By every port and town.

Down in Davy's locker, boy,
Deep, deep, deep,
Far beneath the whirlwind's ploy
Is his sleep.

Spare a tear to a staunch skipper
One that never flinched,
Hard to the icy wheel he stood
Wind-bitten, weather pinched,
Grappled the cruel sou'wester's mood,
The deadly tempest clinched.

Down in Davy's locker,¹ boy,
Deep, deep, deep,
Never hail or "ship ahoy"
Breaks his sleep.

BLACK WEATHER ON THE LAKES.

Nor'west wind that was his fellow
Breathe a sigh for him,
Home bound birds shall miss his holloa
Where the shores grow dim,
Stranger eyes shall mark their phalanx
Up the horizon's rim.

Down in Davy's locker, boy,
Still, still, still,
Oh, the winds have had their ploy
And the waves their will!

Whoso loved a lake sailor
Seek for him no more,
Kings have no such winding sheet
As richly palls him o'er
With agate, jade and living green,
Many a mile from shore.

Hail not him with "Ship ahoy,"
To the brave, the deep.
Down in Davy's locker, boy,
Is his sleep.

'VARSITY NOCTURNE (1907)

(With apologies to Thomas Hood.)

It is evening in the city, down the street fleet feet
Hurry scurry o'er the pavements with a clamp,
stamp, tramp!

Hark, spurred on by cold and hunger, how they
thump, bump, hump!

In the distant west the sunset o'er the chill, still hill
Spreads its lingering light as though it meant to die
sky-high.

See the waffle-wagon lumber through the glow, so
slow,

And a rascal school-boy dropping down his books,
looks, hooks!

Now above the streets come out the balls of bright,
white light,

And a tom-cat grim and grey comes forth to growl,
prowl, meowl.

Similarly, from the regions of the dark park, hark!

First the rattle of a skirmish, then a push, rush, crush,
While some would-be scrappers halted on the Camp,
stamp, champ,

As an all-unconscious Prof. is muttering, "Next day,
Horace for us."

'VARSITY NOCTURNE (1907)

Meantime a captured Freshie in the halls bawls,
mauls
Till they drown his protestations 'neath a clap-trap
tap.
From a class assembly with an open door pour, roar
Windy speeches as the young Demosthenes seize
pleas
For a chance to shake their fists and bullydoze those
foes
Who cannot pour forth objurgations fell, pell-mell.
Hark! from precincts of the Modern Language club,
hub-bub,
Girls have gone to see a gentleman from France
prance, dance.
But alas! the happy moments oh so spry fly by,
'Tis time for lock-up, hear the dismal gong, ding-dong,
See the dilatory student, how he scurries, hurries,
worries,
Till the doors behind him clatter with a slam, jam,
ram!
Dies at last in silence deep the echo shrill. Chill, still
Stand the ivied College towers, with their grim, dim
rim
Blackly silhouetted on the keen, green sheen
Of the moon. A thousand stars above their deep
sleep keep
Watch and ward, and through the leafless trees the
wandering winds of night
Fly by, cry, sigh, die!

AUGUST.

A bird across my path, a sunlit way,
A place where scented flowers grow and wind-
waved shadows play,
A stream that gurgles by amid the brake
And here and there a spotted water-snake ;
The tufted golden-rod stands high
And crickets sing a summer melody.

A bramble in my path, a windy sigh,
A wood where whispering zephyrs play and sun-
kissed cloudlets fly,
A shimmering here and there among the grass,
And spider-webs are glistening as I pass :
The yellow primrose sleeps till she
Shall wake at sunset's sylvan harmony.

THE ROBIN.

A robin sang for me one day,
With love he lifted up his lay,
'Twas sweet and strong !

The shadows fell, the sky grew gray,
The robin sang his life away
In that sweet song.

And there beneath the old pear-tree
He sleeps and dreams of melody
To wake e'er long,

When soaring far beyond the sun
He'll chant of that short race he's run
In lands of song.

THE COMING OF AUTUMN.

The little winds creep softly through the night,
A thousand voices murmur from the sea,
A thousand dewdrops glimmer o'er the down,
My poppy garden glows beneath the moon,
A bat flits lightly from the tulip-tree ;
The breeze has stirred his drowsiness to flight,
And wakened all the trumpet flowers that clothe the
wall with white.

Mayhap upon this moonlit August eve
Fair Mab will come to tread the velvet green
And drain the poppy cups all dry e'er morn,
Belike 'twas Puck I heard but now, his horn
Heralds the coming of the fairy queen.
No print her feet upon the cobwebs leave,
But at her careless going all the amorous winds
will grieve.

Ah no, Queen Mab will come no more to tread
Her magic mazes by the garden wall.
June and the roses are but memories,
This is sweet summer's kiss before she flees
From lands where lone winds sigh and leaflets fall,
From lands where all her fairest blooms lie dead,
And envious Autumn o'er the hills her riper gold
doth spread.

THE COMING OF AUTUMN.

The harvest moon stands round and full and bright
Above the rising slope of yonder hill.
Upon a silent world she looketh down,
Long since the nightingales have southward flown
And all the drowsy land is wierdly still.
Nay, hark, 'tis still no more, with laughter light
Gay Echo flings a jewel in the sleeping sea of night.

The roving zephyrs bear the sound along,
His distant horn mayhap some dryad blows,
Among the tangled thickets dim and deep,
Or windy windings of the hillside steep,
To hunt the silver-antlered stag he goes,
And o'er the moor, now faint, now rising strong
I hear the long, sweet echoes of his eerie hunting-
song.

What spell comes with it o'er the moonlit lea ?
But now my poppies reddened in the heat,
The golden-rod grew browner by the wall
As sultry breezes stirred its tops so tall
And wafted incense from the wall-flowers sweet.
What spell has waked from sleep each whispering tree
And roused the spray-wet wind that sweepeth shore-
ward from the sea ?

THE COMING OF AUTUMN.

Now clearer, closer comes the echo shrill,
No wandering dryad winds a blast so loud,
The tempest summons all his legions free,
And answering echoes wake the changeful sea,
And on the rising wind are borne abroad.
As through the land he flies to wreak his will,
Hark how his war-song rings from darkened vale
and wind-scarred hill.

I can hear their voices calling from the hollows of
the deep
In their silent lairs and caverns they have wakened
from their sleep,
And the moon is darkened over and the night birds
landward flee,
For the demons of the whirlwind ride abroad upon
the sea.
Oh who shall share their hunting or go forth with
them to war,
Or who shall look into the eyes of the Lord of their
legions, Fear?

Hark, canst hear the rolling thunder and the angry
waters' roar,
Charging, heaving, sweeping, reeling, crashing on
the wave-worn shore?
See, from out the mist and shadows shoots a line of
jagged light,

THE COMING OF AUTUMN.

'Tis the glimmer of the lances of the squadrons of
the night.

Hark, the whirlwind shrieks a warning, "To your
huts and caverns, ye,
"To-night we ride to seek our prey, the lords of the
mighty sea."

The sky is grey behind the eastern crag,
The ravaged land lies silent in the dawn.
My garden, but an hour ago so fair
Is destitute of bloom, but here and there
A gleam of crimson petals stains the lawn.
A few faint gusts of wind whose fury flags
Are torturing the broken vine that from the trellis
sags.

A sudden silence stills the tossing deep,
As suddenly the clouds are backward rolled,
The world is born again through storm and night,
Autumn has come, and from the hills the light
Bursts on a land of crimson and of gold,
And looming blackly on the farthest steep,
Lo, outlined on the sunrise standeth Pan with
all his sheep.

THE SNOW FAIRIES.

Ha for the light of the moon !
Ho for the white of the snow !
Dance and play all the way.
Who is it moaning so loud ?
Only the wind with his blow !
Hush, away, every fay,
Blithe and gay to the northward,
Over the snow, on we go,
And the wind is answering " Northward ho !"
Look at the moon on the sea !
Look at the storm in the cloud !
See it fly far on high,
Rolling from over the wold
Sailing from meadow and lea.
Far on high in the sky
See it die to the northward ;
Over the snow, on we go,
And the wind is answering " Northward ho !"

White as the moon as she riseth slow
All on a winter's night,
And the shadows before her flit and go,
Silent and softly bright,—
So are thy wings, little brother,
White as a snow drift's smother,
And thy lips are red, and thy grey eyes shine,
And thy fairy-gold hair is brave and fine,
And oh !, thou art swift, little brother of mine !

SAINT NICHOLAS.

Drifts of snow all gleaming lie
Over plain and vale and hill,
Now the wind goes sweeping by,
Clouds across the stormy sky
Flit at will.

“Lady Echo, answer me,
“From thy forest shadowed dells,
“Has he come across the sea?
“Hast thou heard in wood or lea
“Chime of bells?”

“One I heard that passed this way,
“Laughing loud and merrily,
“Two white reindeer pulled his sleigh,
“After him trooped elf and fay
“Mad with glee.”

“Whither, whither did he fly?”
“Yonder o’er the gleaming snow
“Where the morning star on high
“Rises in the vaulted sky
“All aglow!”

SAINT NICHOLAS.

“ Haste, if thou wouldst find him ere
 “ Dawn has raised her dusky veil.
“ Seest thou by the snowdrift there
“ Hoofprints, stamped so plain and fair
 “ On the trail ?”

“ Ah, but stay ! for I can hear
 “ Ringing down the windswept lea
“ Tinkling bells approaching near,
“ Silver bells with voices clear,
 “ Stay and see !”

“ Dost thou see him passing by ?”
 “ Nay, my heart has grown too old,
“ Dim with unbelief mine eye,
“ I but see gray phantoms fly
 “ Down the wold.”

“ Needs then, must thou seek in vain,”
 “ Echo answers from the shore,
“ Till thy heart forget its pain,
“ Till thy soul be young again,
 “ Seek no more !”

LITTLE FLOWER

Little flower, I greet thee,
May I often meet thee
 In some woodland haunt.
Oftentimes I spy thee
Sweetly nestling by the
 Pine trees tall and gaunt.

Thou art far above me,
For the sign of love see,
 On thy face so plain.
Thou art what we should be,
Maybe what we could be,—
 Sinless, free from pain !

SERENADE.

Quiet sleep, for care and sorrow
 Cannot reach thee in thy dreaming.
Birds shall wake thee on the morrow,
 Sunlight through the lattice streaming,
 Through the ivy softly gleaming,
Winds spray-laden from the sea,
These shall come to waken thee.

In the night Endymion lonely
 By thy shadowed casement fleeting,
Seeking for his lady only,
 There shall pause to give thee greeting,
 Where thou liest all unweeting,
Whispering, "Sleep, fair sister, sleep,
"Be thy slumber still and deep!"

And the Moon shall come and lightly
 Through the silken curtains peeping
Throw her silver mantle brightly
 Round thee murmuring, "She is sleeping,
 "Hush, ye winds and still your weeping.
"Hush, ye leaves that rustling fall,
"Hush, ye birds that stir and call."

SERENADE.

If thy dream were sudden broken,
If the breezes from the river
Bore a message half unspoken,
Where the shadow leaflets shiver
And the moonbeams dance and quiver,
If a summons broke thy sleep,
Fearless thou wouldst tread that deep !

Sleep thou then, for fear and sorrow
Cannot reach thee in thy dreaming,
If thou wake not on the morrow
If the sunlight softly streaming
Through the vines with dewdrops gleaming
Find thee fled across the sea,
Still, dear love, 'tis well with thee !

SOUTH WIND.

Deep in the heart of the southern wind purreth the
cyclone,
Soft is its voice,
Sweet on the breath of the southern wind murmurs
the myrtle grove,
Slow to rejoice.
Far in the tangles of jungle grass croucheth the tiger
King of his race,
Sweet on the face of the jungle pool swayeth the lily
In sinuous grace.
But king o'er the glades of the southern land
reigneth the cyclone,
Lord of the place,
And in the hearts of the jungle lords fear of the
southern wind
Stands a menace.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

All the birds sleep,
Each small, bright, careful eye is lightly shut
In bosky deep :
Only the rustling, clumsy bat
His midnight watch doth keep.

The breath comes slow
Through all the heavy stillness of the air,
And pulses glow
Touched by a zephyr from the glare
Of moon in the court below.

The veil so slight
That dimly cloaks the gaze of mortal eyes
From sudden sight,
Might it not lift in glad surprise
On this midsummer night ?

And oh, how much
My gain, could I but see who treads these floors
Whom I know such
That when my soul yearns through its doors
I just may feel their touch.

Uplifting now
Caressing, slow, beseeching hands, I call !
Here on my brow
Let but one finger's whiteness fall
I rise, I see, I go !

IN APRIL.

Out in the woods to-day
 Would I might go,
For the wind and the trees are at play,
 And sap runs thick in the leafless bough,
And hollow and hill that I love and know
 Are calling me now.

Out in the woods to-day
 There's a spirit astir
In the gold that cleaves through the grey
 And the distant call, far-off and shrill,
From a flock of crows like a drifting blur
 Over the hill.

L'ENVOI.

Oh, let not golden childhood pass
Like the first dew of morning hours,
A breath across the greening grass,
The scent of April flowers.

In these and it a charm doth dwell
Henceforward sought in vain,
For slyly slips the potent spell
From weary heart and brain.

Ah, such a spell we too did know,
Nor deemed it ours alone
When in the springs of long ago
We to the woods were gone.

How silver gleamed the willow tree,
How sweetly sang each rill
And what a tender mystery
Crowned every pine-topt hill !

And, oh, we looked to see them slip
And paused to hear them call
By many a hollow's shaggy lip
And many a boulder tall !

L'ENVOI.

The fairy folk, the fairy folk,
Sudden they glimmered by
All green and red, and laughter woke
The wind to melody.

Oh then in eager haste we ran,
Shrieking our childish glee,
And looked to find a fairy man
Hiding by every tree.

Fruitless the quest, the labour vain?
Ah say not so, if yet
We found at last for all our gain
The earliest violet !

Ah, say not so, if still there dwells
In well remembered ways,
In leafy dens and bosky dells
And woodland's tangled maze,

The glamour of that golden time
When dewy shone the morn,
And o'er the hill with lilting chime
Puck wound his silver horn.

THE CHOICE AT OUTSET.

The wind is calling, hush, my soul and rest,
It's song is wild and free.
Thy heart of misery shall cease to moan
If thou wilt listen to the message blown,
Hark, voices call thee from the far-off west
And from the sea.

The Chant.

Within the deep woods shadowed by the pine
The brown cones lie, all quietly asleep,
The leaf sighs, " Everlasting rest is mine,"
And softly falls. Can dead leaves wake to weep ?
The dew drops lightly on them where they lie,
The wind moans sometimes as it passes by.

And thou, too, would'st thou find a refuge here,
Here where all nature doth her dirge repeat ?
Silent pine needles falling year by year
Would cover thee, and here no busy feet
Would tramp thy grave, and sorrow long forgot
Would pass her child and surely know thee not.

THE CHOICE AT OUTSET

Or would'st thou sleep where lillies wave so white
In deep sea-caves or shallows where the day
Down-peering through the waters silver-bright
Has lost her gold and robed in crystal grey
Doth linger, hiding mid anemones,
To steal the heart from out the misty seas?

The world out yonder, toil and stifled moan,
Unbroken rest here in the shadows deep,
And from the grave ambition's lust alone
Unsatisfied could wake to softly weep.
What matter of ambition, take thy choice,
All nature calls with sweet, alluring voice.

The Antiphon.

The sunset glows far out within the west,
A promise wrought in characters of fire,
And he who follows where those glories rest
Shall find at journey's end his heart's desire.
And sweeter rest the weary pilgrim finds
Than ocean grave or moaning of the winds.

THE CHOICE AT OUTSET

The path is far to travel, not by day
The glowing sunshine guides in beams of light,
But eagles of the storm swoop on their prey
And shade the trembling land with wings of night,
And thou mayest hear, while northern snows lie round
Thy desolate heart, the gathering gale's dull sound.

But better choose that path however drear
And scorn oblivion's slumber cold and deep.
And what if blind and bleeding, ever near
And nearer comradeship with Death we keep?
At least we shall no more hear sorrow's wail
What time we find our peace in that deep vale.

The night has fallen, out far in the north
The milky way, the path of spirits white,
Upon the star-gemmed heavens spreadeth forth
It's veil of misty, softly glowing light.
Seek thou that path, oh soul, and there forget
Thy dream of finding rest that lingers yet.

The wind is calling, hush, my soul, and rest,
The song is wild and free.
Thy heart of misery must cease to weep
And thou with life and duty trysting keep.
Hark, voices call thee from the far-off west
And from the sea.

COMPENSATION.

What, Lord of them

Who dwell in shadow from their hour of birth,
Who find no unmixed joy in all the gladsome earth,
Who hold with feeble hands thy garment's hem,
What, Lord, of them ?

Shall they not walk in gloom,

How may sick eyes rejoice to see the sun ?
They go bewildered till the light is done,
Their's is no peace save in the narrow room
Where Thou alone mayest come.

What of the sin,

Was it a thing that each deliberate chose,
Or fell he far afield among his foes,
Or was he sick in the self that dwells within,
What of the sin ?

Shalt Thou not walk with him,

Because the shadow darkened all the way,
And though he saw, he might not love the day,
And because all his thoughts were weak and dim,
Shalt Thou not walk with him ?

THE MASTER POET.

Not his the gleam of hope that o'er the child
A prophet's mantle throws,
And leads the tender feet through passes wild,
And bright along the pathway glows
As forward ever tirelessly he goes.

Not his the hand that laid along the lyre
Wakes melody alone,
Whose lyric touch and all too facile fire
Strikes faultlessly the readier tone,
Knowing no master-chord of joy or moan.

Nor his laurel wreath, the flush of fame
The glamour of renown
As o'er the altar he but breathes a name
And lo, the fire from heaven leaps down
To glorify a yet unwithered crown.

But where with myriad wheels the noisy loom
Weaves day and night
A shadow mid the shadows, in the gloom
Of life he stands and lacking light
Dreams of a dawn more sure, a day more bright.

THE MASTER POET.

Not his he thinks to sing the perfect song
Who only knows
The rhythm that the wheels beat all day long,
Till from the full heart turgid flows
Tumultuous, hot, a tide of human woes !

No sweet restraint of studied measure holds
Those floodgates of the soul.
In burning words the simple tale unfolds
It's joy, it's passion and it's dole,
The heart of man that brooks no light control.

He sings the common hope, the joy, the dread
Where common men have part,
The weary, weary road the many tread,
The tramway, engine-room and mart,
And singing so he reaches every heart !

And to the poet comes at last the day
Undreamed, though destined long,
When the great Truth has thrust it's moulds away
And fronts the heavens, calm and strong,
And his heart tells him, " This the master-song !"

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Let your foot softly fall,
It is the first upon this virgin snow,
You crunch a million crystals as you go,
The crumbling atoms are mosaics all,
How fair we may not know.

See how the scene is spread !
Had ever stage a setting like to this ?
Yonder the pines yearn up the moon to kiss,
The sapling showers diamonds on your head,
And all so silent is !

Let us in quiet pass,
Soon enough when the Christmas bells awake
In the distant city, and sweet tremors shake
The laden bough and thicket of tall grass,
Here is a fairer wonder than the Mass.

For we are come away
To seek God in the house Himself has made.
We found men sorry, tired and afraid,
Too little joy there was to keep His day,
And so we sought this untrod woodland way.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Happy for us, my dear,
To find our solace in the perfect scene
With gladdened eyes and spirits made serene
Where of all ills the human heart may fear,
No sight, no sound hath been !

Think of the high intent
That spread this beauty for the eye of man,
The garnished stage, the grandeur of the plan,
And then the actor with his garment rent,
Down at the heels and soiled and discontent !

Ah, let us be not so !
Let us be separate though we stand alone,
Leaving the ways of men to seek our own.
There is no way of all the ways we go
But God himself doth know !

No surety but His,
For all may sow, but who shall swear to reap ?
Or promise one he loves to wake from sleep ?
And yet the power, the goodness certain is
Written at large in such a scene as this.

Therefore stand here in awe,
And let a truce of God be in the heart
That Christ may enter in and make a start
To harmonize our discords with His law.
Listen ! the silver bells without a flaw !

THE PRISONER.

A soul dwelt in a narrow prison-cell,
Despair, the warder, watched the vaulted door,
Barred was the single shaft of light that fell
Across that stone-paved floor.

And as the darkness deepened night and day,
And never mortal voice spoke through the gloom
Till hope and love and joy had fled away
And even pain grew dumb,

Then said the Man, "Behold, I stand alone,
"My kind disown me, neither part have I
"'Mongst mortal men, unanswered I make moan
"Praying, demanding, 'Why?'"

"Yet, since I am denied the common dole
"Of freedom, fellowship and heaven's blue,
"Let me the more in courage wrap my soul
"And to myself be true."

THE PRISONER.

“ Here in these narrow walls my throne I set,
“ Here raise my palace ramparts to the sky,
“ I conquer fate, and never lived there yet
“ So great a king as I.”

“ My house I fill with treasure from afar,
“ Mountain and sea yield up each precious stone.
“ The spreading fields of heaven, star by star,
“ Are, as it were, mine own ! ”

“ Thus I to while the lonely hours and slow
“ In this dim prison-cell of loss and doubt
“ Have built my house of dreams so fair that, lo,
“ The whole world knocks without.”

THE WINDOW OF HAY.

The street-car rattles down the dusty road
In long drawn-out and jarring sub-refrain
To thoughts that ride rough-shod through a
weary brain

Plying the unremittent whip and goad
Of direful need, "Go forth and toil," they say,
"Though hope and youth and joy fall by the way."

"Here are thy fellow-toilers, mark each face,
"The flabby cheek, the wandering, vacant eye,
"Furrows that Time repudiates. "Not I
"Dared so the godlike image to erase,
"It is the thought within, the harrowing care
"Sordid and mean hath set its signet there."

How ill it is, reflecting on an ill,
And in despair, having grown brave to say,
"This is my fate, I'll bear it as I may,
"There are happier men than I, the sun shines still,"
Then to look forth for cheerfulness and light,—
Lo!, on all sides the same ill meets the sight.

THE WINDOW OF HAY.

I tell you, I was well nigh sick of God,
So many weary days had come and gone
And not one deed of righteousness outshone,
Each for himself from the cradle to the sod,
None wise enough to learn by misery,
Serf to the hope his harvest yet may be.

All understanding in me rose and railed
That man in the mass is born to such a strife,
Grovvelling to sustain precarious life,
“Mere nothingness were better, God has failed,”
My outraged human dignity made cry;
And then a sudden vision caught my eye.

The window of a barn across a field
Bright in the glory of the setting sun,
Well-filled though winter now was almost done
With warm brown hay, the autumn's bounteous yield,
And gazing I became that child who oft
Used to play shouting in the scented loft.

But ah, more dear than recollection came
Subtle assurance that the fruitful seed
Shall yet convert men to a simpler creed
Of useful life and fresh, untainted fame,
And for a kinder age its bounty spread
No more misprized the lesson than the bread.

TO ONE ABSENT.

I watched the sunset redden into light
After a day of rain,
I felt the wet spring wind upon my face,
And the old dream cried aloud in my heart again,
The old, dead dream dreamed out in bitter pain.
What, shall the spring come back and bring not thee?
Oh, come no more, no more,
Till I have made this teasing voice be dumb,
Summer or spring that climb the eastern shore
And bring the birds to sing on as before.
I cannot rest, I am so ill at ease
In the city's crowded space,
Yet would not be alone and linger on,
Thinking I catch some glimmer of thy face
In every crowd that throngs the noisy place.
Why, I am grown so fanciful with dreams,
Dreaming alone all day
Only to think your name, to turn your songs,
And lo, your shadow on the page I play,
And I scarce breathe till the mist dries away.

AUDREY DOWN THE LANE.

Pretty Audrey down the lane
Came to call on me,
Came in state as might a queen,
Fairest maiden ever seen
With her courtiers three.
Will she come to call again,
Pretty Audrey down the lane,
Back again to me ?

The winds they miss their playfellow,
The flowers are sad to see,
And pretty Audrey down the lane
She comes no more to call again
With little courtiers three.
All the leaves are turning yellow,
All the apples over mellow,
Where, oh where is she ?

Pretty Audrey down the lane,
Come again to me,
Come in state, a little queen,
Fairest maiden ever seen
Bringing courtiers three.
Be they three or six or ten,
So that Audrey comes again,
Welcome shall they be.

SONG IN THE MOUNTAINS.

My love he is a shepherd boy
Who in the mountains tends his sheep,
By day he pipes in careless joy
And nightly doth his vigil keep,
And when, half-wakeful, half-asleep,
Over the watch fire leaneth he,
Ah then, I know, he thinks of me.

Sometimes I bring my kine from byre
Down the green vale between the hills,
And then I hear him from afar
While echo every hollow fills,
Till my own heart in answer thrills,
And inly sings and doth rejoice
To hear my name wed to his voice.

Oh, when the winds of the spring shall come
Out of the south, out of the south,
And the woods awake to the fairy's drum,
And melody dwell in den and dell
That spring hath kissed with her maiden mouth,
When April the vestal offers up
The wine of the earth in a lily cup,
Then will I go by the open lea
To the lane where my true love waits for me!

TO PEGGY.

Oh, Peggy my own, I'm waiting alone,
I'm waiting alone for you, for you,
Summer is gone and the wild birds are flown,
Oh, would I might fly to you, to you.
An owl in the tree is mocking me,
And he asks me, "To who? To who? To who?"
To Peggy my own, to Peggy alone,
"To who?" To you. "To who?" To you.
Oh, Peggy my own, I'm waiting alone,
So long alone for you, for you,
The moon is high and the winds go by
A-murmuring, love, of you, of you.
An owl in the tree is mocking me,
And he asks me, "To who? To who? To who?"
To me, my dear, for I've ears to hear
When the whole world sings of you, of you,
Of who? Of you. Of who? Of you.

I know not where thine errant steps have led,
The days, the months, the years pass on apace,
Lo, all the summer blooms long since have fled,
And to the darkening south I turn my face
And long for spring to come with wind and rain,
Yet fear no spring will bring thee back again.

A BALLAD OF THE LAKES.

My love she went a-sailing
Ere yet the day was done,
And a wind blew up, and a wind blew up,
Straight out of the setting sun.

I sat on a rock a-fishing
Where the bronze-black bass fish swim,
And the eddies swirl and suck and curl
When the river tide comes in.

She hailed me from the headland
And I saw the brown sail swing
Till the rope ran tight and it lifted light
As the sweep of a wild duck's wing.

"Oh where go ye a-sailing,
"For the day will soon be done,
"And see the shroud of shifting cloud
"That's following up the sun?"

"It's off I am to the eastward,
"To the rim of the world away,
"Ply sail and oar for the far-off shore
"And none shall bid me stay."

A BALLAD OF THE LAKES.

So she sailed away to the eastward
To the far horizon's rim,
Where rosy kissed through a veil of mist
The line of the shore lay dim.
And the sun sank down the marshes
In a field of flame he rolled,
The heaving track from the boat slipped back
Like a path of molten gold.
Each little wave seemed smiling,
Lips curled in a rosy bow,
Like a babe asleep on the breast of the deep
That rocked it to and fro.
And I sat on my rock a-fishing
While further down the west
The sun sank slow to his bed below
In the marshes' swaying breast.
Sudden a white owl hooted
From his nest in the pine hard by,
And a whip-poor-will sent an answer shrill
From the depths of the flaming sky.
I looked away to the westward
And there I saw it stand,
A cloud pure white and small and bright
As the palm of an opened hand.

A BALLAD OF THE LAKES.

One leap to the jutting headland,—
Like a blow it stung my face,
The cap of wind with the threat behind
Of the squall that comes apace.

Out on the lake there widened
A wreathing ring of black,
And the spreading cloud like an out-flung shroud
Promised the coming wrack.

The waves rose white and frothing
With a hiss like a rattle-snake
That glides at night past the lantern's light,
On the path through a slimy brake.

Have you seen the inland waters
When the black squall rides the wave?
For it comes like light and there is no flight,
And you call on God to save.

As I, one breath, "Save, save her!"
And I plunged in the driving roar;
For my light canoe pierced through and through
Lay high on the rocky shore.

Clean stroke, long breath, poised body,
They laugh at your manhood's pride,
The billows that seethe and drive in your teeth
When the breath cramps in your side.

A BALLAD OF THE LAKES.

A quarter-mile to the headland?
Ten miles of boiling hell!
Blind, choked and stung, bruised, tossed and
In a world that heaved and fell. [flung
But once, from the crest of a comber
The gleam of a distant sail,
As slight a thing as a butterfly's wing
Tossed into the teeth of the gale.
On, on, is your blood turned water?
Shall a straining muscle's pain
Though it snap like tow speak louder now
Than the cry of heart and brain?
In my ears the roar of thunder,
In my eyes a spray blood-red,
But once I sank, lost wind and drank,
And something snapped in my head!
Do you know the way of the waters
When their sudden wrath is o'er?
Rubbish and wrack they cast safe back,
And they cast me on the shore.
Do you know the way of the waters
The hungry, restless wave?
They take for toll a living soul
And no man knows the grave.

A BALLAD OF THE LAKES.

Then search no more by the marshes
Where the moon stands up so white,
Has never a bird through the silence stirred
All the long, bright summer night.

Then seek no more by the river
Where the water lilies gleam,
So pale and still, so ghostly chill
Like a dead face in a dream,

For the eyes may ache with seeking,
They may search till they see no more,
And the heart grow old and the pulse beat cold
Ere my love comes back to shore.

SAPPHO TO THE YEARS.

Oh passing years, bitter sweet years of youth,
I have turned all your dross to gold, ye years,
As diamonds have I strung your heavy tears,
And from your ways of flint have wrought my Time-
less Truth.

Oh stealing years, oh years whose tale is told,
You have turned all my gold to grey, oh years,
Carved on my brow your seal of pain and fears
And left me standing solitary, crowned and old !

IMMACULATI.

Whom do the waters call
 To the deep,
Out where the shadows fall,
 Down where the silent sleep?
Not we of the forge and the loom and the wheel,
 not we
Are the children she calleth home at dusk, our
 mighty mother, the Sea.

Forth they come from the lands
 Of strife,
Beating with unstained hands
 The doors of the house of life.
Oh strayaway child of dreams, not us but thee
She calleth home to her bosom at dusk, our mighty
 mother, the Sea.

TO MARY.

And do you sleep so sound, my dear,
Who once were troubled so,
And is there no remembered pain
Into the grave may go ?

“Dust to dust and mine to earth,
“And peace at last to all.
“I am content it lie so tent
“In the good brown mother’s pall.”

And dream you not of us, my dear,
Whose wound was sore and deep,
And turn you not with a troubled thought
To stir you in your sleep ?

“Light, so light a ghost am I
“By the weight I laid aside
“No pain nor fear may come me near
“Since the blessed day I died.”

TO MARY.

And shall we hear your voice no more
That was so sweet and strong,
And in our griefs shall no one come
To scare them with a song ?

“ Listen ye in the organ wind
“ God’s lullabies to hear,
“ And in your dream my voice shall seem
“ A thousandfold more clear.”

Your beauty it was so bright, my dear,
So hard to lay away,
There never went as fair a thing
Into the dull, dead clay.

“ Look you down in the summer wood
“ And up to the midnight blue,
“ The flowers that blow, the stars that glow
“ Shall seem more fair to you.”

And shall you be forgot, my dear,
And yours an unknown grave
Because your love and worth to us
Not to the world you gave ?

TO MARY.

“Nay, I shall live while the rose may live,

“And sing till the birds be dumb,

“And the thought of me in the memory

“Like a sweet, old scent shall come.”

“In your joy and pain, in your loss and gain,

“In your song shall I have part,

“And keep my home, and find my room

“Forever in your heart.”

THE END.

